

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan ANNEX

Town of Fairfax

Introduction

The Town of Fairfax is a small-sized town in Marin County, California. The Town has a population of 7300 people, based on the 2000 census¹. Last year, the Town's budget was \$5,326,523. The Town employs 33 people. While the Town provides local police services, the fire services are supplied by a separate fire district.

The Planning Process

This process of preparing this plan was familiar to the Town of Fairfax. The Town has a Safety Element in its General Plan last updated in 1995 that includes a discussion of fire, earthquake, flooding, and landslide hazards. In addition, the Town routinely enforces the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements (which, since 1988, have required mitigation for identified natural hazards). The Town's effort has focused on building on these pre-existing programs and identifying gaps that may lead to disaster vulnerabilities in order to work on ways to address these risks through mitigation.

Many of the activities conducted by the Town were fed into the planning process for the multi-jurisdictional plan. The Town participated in various Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) workshops and meetings, including meetings held in conjunction with Marin County and ABAG in Marin County. In addition, the Town has provided written and oral comments on the multi-jurisdictional plan. Finally, the Town provided information on facilities that are viewed as "critical" to ABAG.

Key Town staff met on several occasions to identify and prioritize mitigation strategies appropriate for the Town. Staff involved in these meetings included the Town Manager, Planning Director, Interim Planning Director, Building Official, Public Works Director, and Chief of Police. At one of the meetings, the general priorities and appropriate Town departments were identified. Another meeting identified preliminary budgets and potential funding sources for strategies designed as "High" priority.

On April 6, 2005, the "draft" annex went before the Town Council during a regular public meeting. Only minor technical/typographical changes were requested before approving Resolution No. 2370, adopting the plan and strategies. The "draft" annex was submitted for FEMA approval via ABAG, however it was returned for additional requested changes. The annex, with changes, was resubmitted to the Town Council at the next public meeting on June 1, 2005, at which time the public had the opportunity to make additional comments. There was discussion about the purpose of this document, and the changes were found to be satisfactory. Subsequently, Resolution No. 2378, amending Resolution No. 2370, was approved. The mitigation strategies will become an implementation appendix to the Safety Element.

¹ For complete Census information on this Town, see <http://www.bavareacensus.ca.gov/>.

Hazard and Risk Assessment

The ABAG multi-jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, to which this is an Annex, lists nine hazards that impact the Bay Area, five related to earthquakes (faulting, shaking, earthquake-induced landslides, liquefaction, and tsunamis) and four related to weather (flooding, landslides, wildfires, and drought). Except for tsunamis and active fault surface rupture, these hazards also impact this community. Tsunamis do not impact the Town of Fairfax because it is not along the coast. No active faults are mapped as rupturing the surface in the Town.

While the Town has undertaken a number of general hazard mapping activities since the first Safety Element was prepared, all of these maps are less detailed and are not as current as those shown on the ABAG website at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/>.

The Town has suffered a number of landslides, road slippages and other storm related damage within the Town over the past. Fairfax was most recently affected in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declared winter storm disasters of 1995/96 and the FEMA declared disaster El Niño storms of 1998.

Information on disasters declared in Marin County is at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/disaster-history.html>.

The Town examined the hazard exposure of Town urban land based on the information on ABAG's website at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/pickdbh2.html>. Of the 1,008 urban acres in the Town,

- ◆ 34 acres are in the 100-year flood plain, while an additional 40 acres are in other flood-prone areas;
- ◆ There are no acres subject to dam inundation;
- ◆ 663 acres are in areas of existing landslides;
- ◆ The California Geological Survey has not completed mapping of earthquake induced landslide hazards in the Town. However, this hazard is viewed as similar to that posed by weather-related landslide hazards.
- ◆ 303 acres are in areas of moderate, high, or very high liquefaction susceptibility;
- ◆ 1,008 acres are in the highest two categories of shaking potential, in large part because the Town lies midway between the San Andreas-North Golden Gate fault, about 7.5 miles to the west, and the Roger's Creek and North Hayward faults, approximately 14 miles to the east;
- ◆ 54 acres are subject to high, very high, or extreme wildfire threat (because of the urban nature of the Town), but 996 acres are in wildland-urban interface threat areas.
- ◆ Drought, though a potential problem in the Town of Fairfax, is not fully assessed. The Town will be working with ABAG and the various water supply agencies on this issue.

The Town also examined the hazard exposure of infrastructure based on the information on ABAG's website at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/pickdbh2.html>. Of the 37 miles of roadway in the Town,

- ◆ 2 miles of roadway are in the 100-year flood plain, while an additional two miles are in other flood-prone areas;
- ◆ no roads are in an area subject to dam inundation;
- ◆ 20 miles of roadway are in areas of existing landslides;
- ◆ The California Geological Survey has not completed mapping of earthquake induced landslide hazards in the Town. However, this hazard is viewed as similar to that posed by weather-related landslide hazards.
- ◆ 13 miles of roadway are in areas of moderate, high, or very high liquefaction susceptibility;
- ◆ all 37 miles of roadway are in the highest two categories of shaking potential;
- ◆ while one mile of roadway is subject to high, very high, or extreme wildfire threat, 36 miles of roads are in wildland-urban interface threat areas.

Finally, the Town examined the hazard exposure of critical health care facilities, schools, and Town-owned buildings based on the information on ABAG's website at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/pickcrit.html>.

Of the critical facilities in the Town:

- ◆ no critical health care facilities, or schools, are in either the 100-year flood plain or in other flood-prone areas;
- ◆ the Town Hall, Police Department, Fire Department, and Women's Club (Council Chambers) are in the 100-year flood plain.
- ◆ no critical health care facilities, schools, or Town-owned facilities are in an area subject to dam inundation;
- ◆ no critical health care facilities, schools, or Town-owned facilities are in areas of existing landslides;
- ◆ The California Geological Survey has not completed mapping of earthquake induced landslide hazards in the Town. However, this hazard is viewed as similar to that posed by weather-related landslide hazards.
- ◆ no critical health care facilities, schools, or Town-owned facilities are in areas of moderate, high, or very high liquefaction susceptibility;
- ◆ one long-term care facility, all 3 schools, the fire station, police station and the Town Hall are in the middle categories of shaking potential;
- ◆ one long-term care facility, all 3 schools, the fire station, police station and the Town Hall are in wildland-urban interface threat areas.

In spite of the areas of the Town located in flood-prone areas, there are only four repetitive loss properties in the Town based on the information at <http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/pickflood.html>.

The Town plans to work with ABAG in 2005 through early 2006 to improve the earthquake risk assessment information being compiled by ABAG by providing information on unreinforced masonry buildings and soft-story apartments located in the Town. (Annex C of *Taming Natural Disasters*.) Additionally, since the impacts of the other potential disasters are not fully developed, the Town has reviewed the hazards identified and ranked the hazards based on past disasters and expected future impacts. The conclusion is that earthquakes, flooding, and wildfire rank the highest in importance. Landslides are next most important, with tsunamis being of least importance.

Mitigation Activities and Priorities

As a participant in the ABAG multi-jurisdictional planning process, Town of Fairfax staff helped in the development and review of the comprehensive list of mitigation strategies in the overall multi-jurisdictional plan. The list was discussed with the Town Chief of Police, the Ross Valley Fire Chief, the acting Building Official, the Public Works Director, the interim Planning Director, and the acting Town Manager in February and March of 2005. The tentative decision on priority was made based on a variety of criteria, not simply on an economic cost-benefit analysis. These criteria include being technically and administratively feasible, politically acceptable, socially appropriate, legal, economically sound, and not harmful to the environment or our heritage.

Over time, we are committed to developing better hazard and risk information to use in making those trade-offs. We are not trying to create a disaster-proof region, but a disaster-resistant one. In the Town of Fairfax, many of the strategies are programs already existing as part of the planning process from plan and project reviews, building and fire code enforcement, to development of the Town's General Plan. Some activities will require funds that have not been identified. The Town will be working to identify potential funding sources, including capital improvement budgets, bond issues, and federal or state grants.

These draft priorities were submitted to the Town Council at a public meeting on April 6, 2005, during which, there were no public comments except to the annex. The final strategies (as shown in the attached Table) will become an Implementation Appendix to the Town's Safety Element.

In addition, the Town examined the hazard exposure information to Town-owned critical facilities supplied by ABAG. The Town has determined that the combination of construction type, age, and shaking exposure to Fire Station No. 21, the Police Department and Town Hall are significant. Therefore, the Town plans to investigate applying for a Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant to retrofit these buildings. No determination has been made at this time for the Town-owned Women's Club (Council Chambers) and Pavilion (secondary level disaster shelter.) It is anticipated both buildings will need retrofitting. The Pavilion should be considered for renovation to qualify as a principal disaster shelter by Red Cross standards.

The Plan Maintenance and Updating Process

This plan will be monitored on an on-going basis via the Planning Department. However, the major disasters affecting our community, legal changes, notices from ABAG as the lead agency

in this process, and other triggers will be used. Within the next year, the General Plan Advisory Committee will be reviewing the entire Safety Element of the General Plan, of which this document will become a part. Therefore, the Annex will be a discussion item on their agenda, and will be evaluated in light of technological and political changes or other significant events. The public will continue to be involved whenever the plan is updated and, as appropriate, during the monitoring and evaluation process. The General Plan Advisory Committee will review all new public comments, and be responsible for determining if the plan should be updated.

The Town of Fairfax is committed to reviewing and updating this plan annex at least once every five years, as required by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The Town Planning Director will contact ABAG four years after this plan is approved to ensure that ABAG plans to undertake the plan update process. If so, the Town again plans to participate in the multi-jurisdictional plan. If ABAG is unwilling or unable to act as the lead agency in the multi-jurisdictional effort, other agencies will be contacted, including the County's Office of Emergency Services. Cities should then work together to identify another regional forum for developing a multi-jurisdictional plan.